



Pesticide and Noxious Weed Newsletter

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Nebraska Department of Agriculture

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Reregistration Decision in the Making for Atrazine

Recently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its interim reregistration eligibility decision (IRED) on atrazine, and is negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Syngenta and the other registrants of this active ingredient. Of importance to Nebraska agriculture is the fact that a number of community water systems have been targeted for enhanced monitoring and potential atrazine use restrictions based on previous monitoring data. None of these are in Nebraska, however, two of them, the cities of Topeka and Kansas City, Kansas, obtain their water from the Kansas River system, which receives part of its flow from the Big Blue, Little Blue, and Republican River watersheds in Nebraska. The IRED and the MOA with the registrants will place the burden of meeting new drinking water criteria squarely on the registrants, the states where it is registered and the growers using the product. If these criteria are not met, atrazine use will be prohibited in the watershed affecting the drinking water supply.

As indicated in pages 83-85 of the IRED (pages 96-98 of the PDF document at <http://www.epa.gov/oppsrd1/reregistration/atrazine/>), the new drinking water level of comparison proposed by EPA is for total chloro-triazine (or TCT: atrazine plus the concentrations of three chloro-degradates believed to be toxicologically similar to atrazine). For a few of the community water systems targeted nationwide, the TCT trigger is a "one-strike" deal; atrazine will be prohibited after one exceedance of this level. For the other community water systems targeted, including Topeka and Kansas City, the TCT trigger is a "two-strike" deal; if this level is reached in two of the five years of enhanced monitoring, atrazine use will be prohibited. If the trigger is not reached during the five-year enhanced monitoring period, the monitoring can be eliminated. For systems not targeted in the IRED and MOA, exceedances of the TCT triggers obtained from quarterly Safe Drinking Water Act monitoring, which most community water suppliers participate in, will begin the "two-strike" phase of this agreement.

The development of a mitigative watershed plan to prevent the use prohibition from taking place is included in EPA's decision. This will likely involve as many partners as possible to come up with a workable solution. This emphasizes the importance of continuing our efforts in the Big Blue and Little Blue River basins, where a large percentage of the Kansas River atrazine load originates. It also drives home the fact that our actions, regardless of the watershed, may have widespread effects. Agriculture's continued efforts are needed at minimizing downstream

impacts by applying pesticide management measures, in conjunction with soil and water conservation practices.

More information, including a slide show summarizing much of the information used in the reregistration process, can be found at the web address mentioned above. If you have questions concerning this information, please contact NDA at (402) 471-2394.

National Pesticide Information Center

Do you have questions about pesticide safety? Need information on the physical properties of a pesticide? Need an MSDS sheet? Need pesticide manufacturer contact information? Need home pest identification and management tips? Get objective, science-based chemical, health and environmental information about pesticides at the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC). Call them seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (CT) at 800-858-7378. Or view all of the information and links at <http://npic.orst.edu>.

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Weeds of the Great Plains Available

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is pleased to announce the new *"Weeds of the Great Plains"* book is available to the public. This book is written to meet the needs of farmers, ranchers, and home owners, as well as the more technical expectations of botanists.

The book is a collaborative effort between the University of Nebraska and NDA. It features detailed narratives of over 400 plants; line drawings of 266 weeds; large colored photographs; close-up photographs of weed flowers, seedlings and key identification characteristics; identification methods to distinguish similar species; historical attributes and uses of each plant; and plant habitats and descriptions of growth forms.

The authors of the book include Dr. James Stubbendieck, Professor of Agronomy at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln; Mitch Coffin, Noxious Weed Program Manager for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture; and Lori Landholt, Research Technologist for the Department of Agronomy at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Books are available for purchase from NDA for \$25 by calling (402) 471-2394. An order form is available online by visiting the Noxious Weed Program web page at <http://www.agr.state.ne.us/division/bpi/nwp/nwp1.htm>.

New Inspector in Panhandle



Jeff Elsen joined NDA's Pesticide Program on June 23rd as the inspector for the Panhandle and western

Sandhills counties (replacing Dan Keener who left to pursue a job in private industry). Jeff lives near Sidney, having previously worked for Pfizer Chemical. Jeff has experience in both crop and animal production and is currently visiting facilities in his territory to introduce himself to dealers and applicators. Welcome aboard Jeff!

Water Quality Monitoring

The Nebraska Pesticide Act states that while pesticides are valuable to our state's agriculture, "it is essential to the public health and the [sic] welfare that pesticides be regulated to prevent adverse effects on humans and the environment." To that end, NDA

To ensure notification of recertification training, as well as updates to rules and regulations, all applicators should notify NDA if they have moved within the last three years. This responsibility falls upon you, the applicator.

works closely with Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), the University of Nebraska, the U.S. Geological Survey, and others to better characterize the impacts of pesticides in our environment.

In 2002, creek samples collected by NDEQ in Jefferson County were found to contain extremely high concentrations of several corn herbicides, including atrazine, isoxaflutole, and metolachlor. NDA initially suspected a point source event such as an accidental spill or illegal disposal, and sent letters to corn growers in the area advising them of potential ramifications. NDA was subsequently approached by the Nebraska Corn Growers Association (NCGA) about the potential to use its Husker Farmers Advocating Resource Management (FARM) assessment program as a way of potentially changing pesticide management behavior and/or increasing the use of

best management practices (BMPs) to reduce pesticides in runoff. This program uses a confidential, one-on-one assessment which allows the user to make environmental stewardship choices on their farm.

Subsequently, the NGGA held an educational meeting attended by approximately 30 people, including local growers and pesticide dealers, and representatives of NRDs, University of Nebraska and Kansas State University's Cooperative Extension, Kansas Department of Agriculture, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Presentations were given on state and federal pesticide laws, the Clean Water Act and watershed programs, BMPs for water quality, and the Husker FARM program.

Approximately 12 producers attended the meeting and have completed Husker FARM assessments since the initial meeting. This represented a large percentage of the producers who had corn above the sampling point that year. The results indicate a high degree of knowledge about and compliance with the installation of conservation and pest management practices. In addition to general recommendations regarding tillage and pest management, three producers were identified as needing additional practices eligible for financial assistance through the Nebraska Buffer Program, Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program or Natural Resources District cost share for new practices. Cooperation with the NDA, NRCS, and NRD resulted in two producers installing filter strips, grassed waterways, and critical area plantings of grasses and legumes. These newly installed practices will reduce the amount of pesticides, plant nutrients and soil sediment leaving these fields.

Although NDA is responsible for enforcing the Nebraska Pesticide Act, there are limits to what can be done in instances when the source of environmental contamination is unknown. In addition, much of the problem may be coming from labeled uses of the product. This emphasizes the need to consciously think about pesticide applications and potential effects downstream (see related atrazine IRED article). NDA encourages the use of programs, such as Husker FARM, to evaluate your pesticide management and

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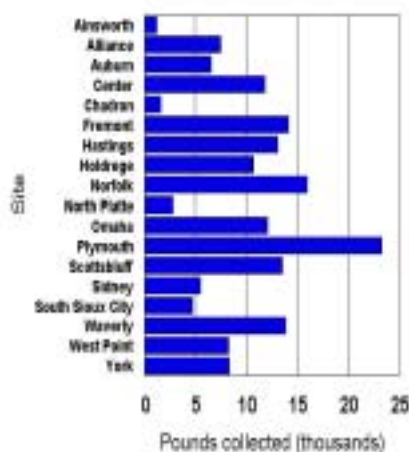
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conservation decisions. Additional information about the Husker FARM program can be obtained from the Nebraska Corn Growers Association at 1-888-CORNGRW or necga1@cs.com. The University of Nebraska offers a similar confidential assessment program, called Farm*A*Syst, where interested landowners fill out at least one of 16 worksheets, depending on their farming operation. Sections pertaining to pesticides and water quality include Crop Pest Management Practices and Pesticide Storage and Handling. Additional information can be received by calling your county extension educator or by visiting <http://fas.unl.edu/index.htm>.

Clean Sweep Update

Another successful series of waste pesticide collections was held this year. A total of 176,284 pounds of pesticide products was collected at 18 sites held between March and May 2003. This brings the total amount of pesticides collected since 1995 to just under 1.9 million pounds. These

Pounds of Pesticide Product Collected by Site



totals have been added to the summary information available at NDA's Clean Sweep Program web page at <http://www.agr.state.ne.us/division/bpi/pes/waste.htm>.

Funding for another, albeit smaller, series of collections is available. The dates and locations of these collections are still being evaluated. Contact Rich Reiman at NDA's Bureau of Plant Industry for information (402) 471-2394.

Reminder: South Dakota Residents and Their Employers

NDA is not issuing reciprocal licenses at this time based on exam scores received from the state of South Dakota.

Over the past two years, there have been several changes made to the Nebraska Pesticide Act and our state Certification Plan which have caused us to look at our reciprocal agreements with other states. Presently, our Pesticide Act does not allow open-book examinations for commercial/noncommercial applicators, therefore, we feel we cannot issue reciprocal licenses based on examination scores from states which do. On that basis, as of June 1, 2003, the NDA ceased recognizing South Dakota's open-book examinations as a legitimate means for fulfilling the requirements for a license issued by us.

All licenses issued prior to June 1, 2003, will be honored until their expiration dates.

Residents of South Dakota who wish to apply pesticides regulated by the Nebraska Pesticide Act, after the expiration of their current reciprocal license, will need to take Nebraska exams.

This action does not impact private applicators (landowners who apply RUPs to personally-owned or rented agricultural property used in the production of agricultural commodities).

Hispanic Family Health Hotline

The National Hispanic Family Health Helpline (1-866-783-2645) is a national helpline that offers consumers free, reliable, and confidential health information in Spanish and English. Callers speak to bilingual and culturally proficient information specialists and by providing their zip code can receive referral to one of over 12,000 local health providers, including community and migrant health centers.

Callers receive basic health information, referral to information sources for the health topic they have questions about, or consumer-friendly,

bilingual Su Familia fact sheets. Currently, fact sheets are available through the helpline and on the web site at <http://www.hispanichealth.org/>. New fact sheets will be developed based on the topics requested by consumers calling Su Familia.

Su Familia is a program of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health and is made possible by support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Office of Minority Health. The Helpline is available from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (ET) Monday through Friday.

Assistance Available for Organic Certification

NDA announced this spring, the availability of cost-share dollars for certifying organic producers and processors. The organic industry is growing, and this cost-share program will provide incentive for the industry to continue its growth. The cost-share dollars, available from a USDA grant to the states, are designed to assist producers, handlers, and processors of agriculture products in obtaining certification under the new national organic guidelines. Those guidelines require certification in compliance with national standards in order to sell, label, or represent agricultural products as organic.

Approximately \$20,000 is still available through the program, which will cost-share up to 75% of the certification costs, or a maximum of \$500 per person. Those interested are invited to visit NDA's web site at <http://www.agr.state.ne.us/division/apd/organic.htm> to learn more, or call Dan Korber at (402) 471-4876 or 800-422-6692. The web site includes links to NDA's application form and instructions, as well as links to USDA's National Organic Program, which contains the regulations for the program, many fact sheets, and a Q&A page.



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